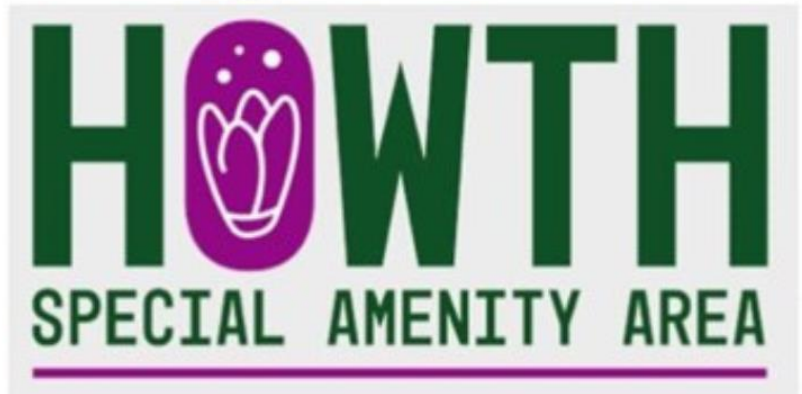


# COMMUNICATION PLAN

2023-2025



## Contents

Introduction.....	2
Key messages.....	3
Key target audiences .....	4
How will the key messages be delivered?.....	5
Useful links .....	8
Sample community-led heritage projects.....	9

## Introduction

A Special Amenity Area Order is a designation under planning and development law that can be applied to areas of outstanding beauty, special recreational value and/or, where there is need for nature conservation.

The Howth Special Amenity Area Order, which recognises the exceptional character of the area was confirmed by the Minister for Environment in 2000. This community-led outcome, which came about because of concern about the nature and scale of development on the Howth Peninsula<sup>1</sup>, means that exemptions from planning permission<sup>2</sup> to properties included in the area do not apply. Most types of development require planning permission.

The Howth Special Amenity Area has a total area of 547 hectares and includes Ireland's Eye, the heathland, woods, cliffs, shingle, beaches and wooded residential areas of the south-eastern half of the Howth peninsula. The order also designates a 21km network of public footpaths (there are four way-marked loop walks covering 41km). The order designates 35 sites and areas of special natural, historical, architectural, archaeological, and geological interest.

These areas have rich biodiversity, including protected species such as the Green-winged Orchid and large colonies of seabirds on Ireland's Eye and the cliffs of Howth Head between Balcadden Bay and the Baily Lighthouse (e.g., kittiwakes, guillemots, razorbills, cormorants, and gannets)<sup>3</sup>.

The Howth Special Amenity Area Management Communication Subcommittee met in June 2023 to develop a communications strategy for the area to tease out the key messages the group wish to convey, identify key target audiences, and suitable methods to communicate with them.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2019-03/SAAO%20Howth%20Operational%20Plan%20%202017th%20june%202015.pdf#:~:text=The%20SAAO%20provides%20the%20most%20secure%20type%20of,public%20concern%20regarding%20the%20nature%20and%20scale%20>

<sup>2</sup> Class 1 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001

<sup>3</sup> Source: [https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2021-03/howth-saao-fact-sheet\\_0.pdf](https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2021-03/howth-saao-fact-sheet_0.pdf)

## Key messages

### What is the Howth Special Amenity Area?

- The Howth Special Amenity Area is protected by a Special Amenity Area Order (granted in 2000), which came about because of community and public concern about the nature and scale of development in the area. These orders are applied to protect areas of outstanding beauty and recreational value, or where there is a need for nature conservation. Exemptions from planning permission<sup>4</sup> do not apply to properties included in the area and most types of development require planning permission.

### Why should you care?

- The area is rich biodiversity, including protected species, large colonies of seabirds, and valuable habitats ranging from Atlantic dry heathland to wetlands, and woodland. The area is also steeped in history and has numerous archaeological sites and monuments (e.g., Aideen's Grave, Howth Castle, St Mary's Abbey, Martello Tower, St Nessian's Church, and Martello Tower), a long fishing tradition, and rich maritime heritage.
- While granting of the Order has been instrumental in protecting the outstanding views, scenery, landscape, and biodiversity on our doorstep, the pathways also provide public access to one of the remaining wild, scenic areas close to the city.
- While the area has unique natural beauty the landscape we see today has been influenced by agriculture and grazing over time, so traditional practices, like grazing by goats to manage the growth of vegetation, are being replicated to preserve and protect the area in a sustainable way.
- The importance of Howth Special Amenity Area for wildlife conservation is reflected in the fact that it is protected at EU, and national level and is designated as:
  - ~ **A Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)** – These are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level because of the habitats and species found there.

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<sup>4</sup> Class 1 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001

- ~ **A Special Protection Area (SPA)** for the protection of rare, vulnerable and migrating birds and wetlands.
- ~ **Howth is also part of the Dublin Bay Biosphere.** In 2015 the North Bull Island Biosphere, designated by UNESCO<sup>5</sup>, was expanded to cover Dublin Bay. Biospheres are learning places for sustainable development as the community have an integral role to play in balancing the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use so people and nature can thrive together.

### **Protect, conserve and enjoy!**

The area is one of Dublin's most popular destinations for tourists and walkers, and we need everyone's cooperation so we can protect, conserve and enjoy it into the future.

- ~ Wildfires are a serious threat to this vulnerable landscape and to wildlife, do your part to reduce the risk (possibly include specific messages here e.g., do not light fires and raise the alarm if you see them)
- ~ Dogs need to be kept on a lead and under control to protect livestock. As the goats move around to graze, temporary signs will be used to alert dog owners - please look out for these.
- ~ Stay on the designated pathways to protect wildflowers, and other wildlife.
- ~ Please respect residents and other visitors to the area.
- ~ If you are interested in volunteering for practical conservation work to manage the Howth Special Amenity Area please contact: [howthsaa@gmail.com](mailto:howthsaa@gmail.com)

## Key target audiences

The local community / inhabitants of the peninsula are the priority target audience for communication (followed by authorities at local and national level, visitors to the area, and tourists). This cohort includes, residents of the peninsula, primary school children and Community groups, residents' associations, businesses, sports clubs, youth and scout / guide / walking group.

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<sup>5</sup>UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Cultural, Economic and Social Organisation.

## How will the key messages be delivered?

The following rebranded, suite of promotional materials will be developed to promote key messages.

Item	Description	Actions
<b>New logo in Irish and English</b>	The logo is currently being finalised and will be used with the Fingal County Council Logo.	Design of logo in formats required for print and digital application.
<b>Video</b>	A short (circa 1-2 minutes), visually impactful video, showcasing Howth Special Amenity Area and explaining <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ What is the SAAO?</li> <li>~ Why should you care?</li> </ul>	Communications subcommittee to draft and agree content of script.  Contract videographer to film and edit footage and supply in required formats for hosting on FCC website and online channels (FCC).
<b>Leaflet</b>	Rebrand and update the existing leaflet <a href="https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2019-03/Howth%20SAAO%20-%20Leaflet.pdf">https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2019-03/Howth%20SAAO%20-%20Leaflet.pdf</a>  This will be available in print at events and in local area (library, businesses) and as a PDF on the Fingal County Council website <a href="https://www.fingal.ie/howth-special-amenity-area-order">https://www.fingal.ie/howth-special-amenity-area-order</a>	Communications subcommittee to draft and agree content.  Print quantities agreed and procured (FCC).
<b>Pop-up signage for events</b>	Two pop up signs for use as a backdrop and to provide information at events.	Communications subcommittee to draft and agree content.  Signage design and production procured (FCC).

Action	Description	Action by
<b>Digital Communication</b>		
<i>Social media (priority action area)</i>	Develop a specification of requirements / request for tender and appoint a contractor to develop and implement a social media campaign / schedule to engage the local community e.g., Instagram, Facebook, TikTok.	Howth SAAO Management Committee / FCC
<i>E-zine</i>	Issue a short, quarterly communication after each SAAO Management Committee meeting to update people on news and developments, sent by email to those that subscribe at events and on the website.	Howth SAAO Management Committee / FCC
<i>Enhance webpages on FCC website</i> <a href="https://www.fingal.ie/howth-special-amenity-area-order">https://www.fingal.ie/howth-special-amenity-area-order</a>	Develop a request for tender and appoint a contractor to update and enhance the website with new logo and additional content: ~ Button to register for Ezine ~ Rebranded leaflet and new video ~ Calendar of events ~ Knowledge base: Reports, research and information. Other elements could include: Spotlight on featured species, Maps and ariel photos, Social media newsfeed.	Howth SAAO Management Committee / FCC
<b>Events/public engagement</b>		
<i>Howth Maritime and Seafood Festival, 9-10 September 2023</i>	Howth SAAO Management Committee stand at Festival – identify members to work at the Festival stand.	Howth SAAO Management Committee
<i>Annual public meeting</i>	Open call for all interested parties to attend – presentations and talks on recent projects and developments e.g., speakers from the Old Irish Goat Society, the Biodiversity Office at FCC, or other organisations in the Howth SAAO Management Committee.	Howth SAAO Management Committee
<i>Annual programme of talks</i>	Schedule talks and walks 3-4 times a year (possibly coinciding with Biodiversity Week in May, Heritage Week in August, and Brigit's Day in February, or with seasonal themes) covering a range of topics e.g., biodiversity, geology, cultural and built heritage, adapting to climate change.	Howth SAAO Management Committee

<b>Dissemination</b>		
<i>Identify dissemination channels</i>	Develop a local network / e-mailing list of residents' groups, community groups, youth, arts and sports clubs, faith communities, through which to promote events and news. Identify and engage with contacts in library, train station, commercial / retailers, historic / community buildings including churches, parochial halls that can assist with promotion on an on-going basis.	Howth SAAO Management Committee
<b>Schools outreach</b>		
Outreach programme for local Primary Schools	<p>Contact the three primary schools in Howth and establish their interest in taking part in an outreach programme.</p> <p><b>Howth Primary School</b>, Tuckett's Lane, Howth, Co. Dublin, D13PW99 01-8323572 <a href="mailto:howthns@gmail.com">howthns@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://howthprimaryschool.ie/">http://howthprimaryschool.ie/</a></p> <p><b>Burrow NS</b>, Howth Road, Sutton, Dublin 13, D13TC04 018325784 <a href="mailto:burrowsecretary@gmail.com">burrowsecretary@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://burrowschool.ie/">http://burrowschool.ie/</a></p> <p><b>St Fintans NS</b>, Carrickbrack Road, Sutton, Dublin 13, D13X528 018391067 <a href="mailto:info@stfintansns.ie">info@stfintansns.ie</a> <a href="https://www.stfintansns.ie/">https://www.stfintansns.ie/</a></p> <p>Contract specialists in environmental education to develop and deliver a tailored outreach programme for schools e.g., four visits per year including field trips and class-based learning about the Howth Special Amenity Area, cocreated with teachers and designed to support the delivery of both the current SESE curriculum and the new Primary Curriculum Framework.</p>	Howth SAAO Management Committee / FCC



## Useful links

**Heritage Signage & Heritage Trail Guidance from Fingal County Council** Fingal County Council has developed guidance to provide clear direction and advice to the public and stakeholders on the best practice, procedures and requirements for the development of heritage signage and heritage trails in Fingal

<https://www.fingal.ie/news/heritage-signage-heritage-trail-guidance-fingal-county-council>

The **Canal and River Trust Interpretive Toolkit** is a useful resource for planning interpretation <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/9817-interpretation-toolkit.pdf>

**The Heritage Council Bored of Boards** publication gives lots of creative ideas for how to interpret local heritage

[https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/bored\\_of\\_boards\\_1mb.pdf](https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/bored_of_boards_1mb.pdf)

**The Heritage Council's Adopt a Monument Scheme** helps communities become actively involved in the conservation and interpretation of their local archaeological and cultural heritage sites. The scheme provides expertise, mentoring and support so the chosen monument can serve as a focal point for heritage-related, educational, and recreational activities, encouraging greater interpretation and understanding

<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/adopt-a-monument>

**The Heritage Council's Heritage in Schools Scheme** provides a panel of over 100 Heritage Specialists (Garda vetted to visit schools) who offer virtual workshops and primary school visits throughout the country <http://www.heritageinschools.ie/>

**Heritage Council guidance on access and inclusion considerations**

<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/advice-and-guidance/resource>

**Heritage Council** funding opportunities including the **Community Heritage Grants Scheme** <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding>

**The Community Monuments Fund** <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d21e3-community-monuments-fund-2022-call-for-projects/>. Contact Heritage Officer [Christine.Baker@fingal.ie](mailto:Christine.Baker@fingal.ie)

**Creative Ireland** offers opportunities for people of all ages across Ireland to engage with creative projects in their local areas <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/>

## Sample community-led heritage projects

**Swords Heritage Trail Audio Guide** Abarta heritage <https://www.abartaheritage.ie> assist communities in producing audio guides and audio books for example the Swords Heritage Trail <https://www.abartaheritage.ie/swords-heritage-trail-audio-guide/>

**Castleknock Virtual Heritage Tour is a** 15-minute video tour <https://youtu.be/qjNZJKFxJZE> developed and produced by Castleknock Tidy Towns that captures Castleknock's past in a way that will appeal to young and old, whether a history or heritage buff, or not.

**Balbriggan Heritage Trail** uses a combination of interpretive panels (in the format approved by Fingal County Council) and a detailed brochure available online or from the local tourist office <http://visitbalbriggan.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Balbriggan-heritage-trail-brochure.pdf>

**Cuilcagh to Cleenish** memory map including music, stories, history, old and new community-made films, recordings, and photographs gathered by the community <https://www.c2c.org.uk/>

**Abbeyleix Climate Action Walk** with QR codes on handmade ceramic tiles at sites of interest linking to an interactive, online story map with short, animated videos <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b2f26a64a6e84b1c8ed418bbc206d1d6>

**St Doulagh's Church 3D virtual tour** by the community archaeology group Resurrecting Monuments demonstrates the use of technology in allowing the viewer to visualise and engage with sites remotely <https://resurrectingmonuments.wordpress.com/>